



Thirsty

M.T. Anderson

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All Chris really wants is to be a normal kid, to hang out with his friends, avoid his parents, and get a date with Rebecca Schwartz. Unfortunately, Chris appears to be turning into a vampire. So while his hometown performs an ancient ritual that keeps Tch'muchgar, the Vampire Lord, locked in another world, Chris desperately tries to save himself from his own vampiric fate. He needs help, but whom can he trust? A savagely funny tale of terror, teen angst, suspense, and satire from celebrated FEED author M. T. Anderson.

Thirsty Details

Date : Published August 9th 2005 by Candlewick Press (MA) (first published March 3rd 1997)

ISBN : 9780763627508

Author : M.T. Anderson

Format : Paperback 237 pages

Genre : Young Adult, Paranormal, Vampires, Fantasy, Horror, Fiction

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The says

This book was a good book but i didnt like it. I kept waiting for it to get good, but it never happened. I hate that this book left so many spots open. He is left without any choice without any course of action to make things at all better.

In this book when Chris hits puberty he doesn't just get zits he starts turning into a vampire. He lives in a society where vampires are common and people hunt them down. I really like vampire books but this one was just a little to slow and kept leaving spots open that needed to be filled. he gets a date with this girl named Rebecca Schwartz to this dance thing but he is kinda turning into a vampire so i think it would be noticeable for people to see. This book is not like any other vampire book/movie i have seen all the other ones i seen they are a vampire in the beginning of the movie and through out but in this book he is turning into one i dont really like how that is. to be honest i really did think it was a good book but just not for me so if you like something new then come check out this book you might like or not.

Rachel Brown says

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Not only does the protagonist fail in everything he attempts, he's mocked fo

Sharrol says

I found this book in the glbt section of my library and was confused by the back of the book.. but then it all makes sense. The book is just an allegory for a gay male teen and dealing with homosexuality. Christopher, the main character, is labeled as a vampire in a world where they are shunned (a gay male in a world which is predominantly straight). The story picks up when Christopher is going through puberty, at which point the vampiric traits suddenly take place. The book goes on to tell Christopher was bitten at birth, which of course says that homosexuality is not a choice and is a trait from the start that doesn't appear until puberty. Christopher often runs away from females, hidden with the excuse in the book that they are vampires. Of course, it's because Christopher is a gay teen. He always feels out of place in his home, in his school, etc. Up until the very end of the book, Chris wonders who he can trust to come out to (there is even a reference to "coming out of the coffin" similar to that of the gay phrase "coming out of the closet") and if whether or not his family will accept him or rat him out. There is even a reference in the book to fairies, and that Chris can finally relate to them. He drifts away from his two best male friends, who say he's been acting strange lately, and the one friend ends up dating his old supposed love interest because "there is no way Chris could date her." In the end, Chris is doomed, which hints that there is no salvation or happiness for gay teens in this world. In the end, there is nothing you can do. You can either live a life of homosexuality in private, or you will be ridiculed and possibly killed in public, just like the vampires who are found out in the book. Aside from the allegory, I found the book to be written very poorly and unfortunately cannot recommend it to

anyone. I put down the book at the end with just a tad bit more knowledge and feel of the characters than the first page.

Crowinator says

Actual rating: 3.5 stars

I was just talking about this book with Catie (sorry, I don't know how to add a GR user to my review) as an example of MT Anderson's under-appreciated skill at crafting disturbing tales, so I reread it this morning. It took me two hours, so it's a quick read, though the unsettling feeling it leaves lasts longer (even knowing what was coming, I still got uneasy). The last time I read this was probably in early 2000s (I even forgot that I own this book!), and it held up to my remembered expectations.

Wealhtheow says

Chris is an ordinary suburban boy. His biggest concerns are that he doesn't really like his friends any more, and he has a huge crush on a popular girl in his class. But with puberty come changes, like the unbearable thirst that comes over him whenever he gets angry, or the way his reflection has started to disappear...Chris begins to suspect that he's turning into a vampire.

The narration and dialog sounded very true to life of my memories of suburban teens, as does Chris's personality, still confused and half-formed. But that realism is to the books detriment as well as its credit--I found much of it almost unbearable to get through. And although I've rarely read a YA vampire book with this kind of worldbuilding (monsters, weres, and vampires are casually known about and generally killed on sight by humans) and never read one with this plot's bleakness, the novelty factor can't make up for my disappointment with (view spoiler)

Thanh says

Once again, another book to add to my 'deserve a basilisk fang through it' collection. I felt no sympathy or any connection to any of the characters. Okay, some/most of the characters.

Christopher is - and I really hate to put it this way, but is another Bella, only this time, it's a he.

He is a whiny and way to angsty for a normal teen. Or either that, he has no backbone. All I could do was scream, "Stuff it, you whiny nincompoop and USE YOUR FUCKING BRAIN AND STOP MAKING EVERYTHING SOUNDS HARDER THAN IT NEEDS TO BE!"

Huh, too bad that advice never got through his thick skull.

He has no common sense either. Who the hell go 'lynching vampires' with their brother and his friends when vampires EXIST and practically everyone in the United States knows it and not just their puny speck of a town? They are seriously asking to die.

Then, there's the 'Chet the Celestial Being' incident. A strange man 'dressed like the FBI agents' comes up to him and supposedly ask him for help - this one thing that somehow 'he' can only solve. Anderson here have him in 'thinking-cap decision' but in the end, you know that "What the hell, I'll give it a shot." is going to happen.

If he does this one task ask of him, Christopher's vampirism is cure. Already, this sound retarded. Dude, if there is a cure, don't you think the world would have less to none vampires? The promise of the cure sounds promising to him, so he agrees.

Then, Tom - his best friend - comes along then 'suggests' that they should go vampire hunting. Again, are you a moron? Vampires are running around and you want to go HUNTING? With insignificant strength and puny muscles, what the hell are you going to do? And armed with no weapons? If you want a cunning and suspicious character, the least you could do was make him believable.

Let see, Jerk - his other best friend. Haumnnn, not an ass, but a blockhead regardless. Who knew high school dudes and gals were so retarded?

Thank goodness the trio eventually break up so that this stupidity would end. Unfortunately, it really didn't end. Chris cared for his friends anyways, regardless of their asshole attitude. Yes, let's give them a ride home because they're, like, my BFFs.

Urm, how about ... NO.

I felt that some characters should have never been needed. I felt like Rebecca, Tom, Jerk and even his brother Paul was worthless. I didn't get how their roles was supposed to play up into the big plot. Not that it was big anyways. This 'book' could have really worked better as fanfiction, but not a novel.

Chris assumes he has to kill to eat ... urh drink. To keep from attacking others, he attack his arm and drink rations from it. Urm, why can't you just take rationed amounts of OTHER PEOPLE'S blood?

Chris, his brother and his brother's friends go to an execution of a vampire. This vampire was apparently caught with her fangs extended and/or without a reflection. And this, apparently is grounds for an execution, because for a vampire to be alive, they must have killed. I suppose that could be grounds for execution. But since when do towns have the jurisdiction to execute people? VAMPIRES THAT COULD KILL US ALL, doesn't that sound like a federal problem?

When Chris calls the police and tries to warn them, they are convinced it's a prank call. Urm, I thought we established the fact that VAMPIRES ARE REAL and is a nationwide problem?

Last words about this book: It was a very dark tale, depressing and would have made me cry if it was written better and more believable. The two things that made this book bearable was Chet and the witty narration. I'm a sucker for sarcastic and witty comments - wow, a pun right there.

Anyways, Chet is totally bad-ass and would make an awesome villain. He's cocky and arrogant, but he's smarter than any other characters in the book combine.

Right, that reminds me, exactly why does he need Chris again? He can phases in and out like a ghost so that no one can touches him and yet, he need Chris to place the Arm in Tch'mungar's world - when Tch'mungar himself hired Chet in the first place?

Urm, yeah, according to my knowledge, he zapped The Thing With The One Piece Hair into a pile of cinder. And Bat? Well, he died too within a few seconds.

The guy is practically GOD. How the hell can a bunch of vampires stand up to his godly might?

So yes, the book was predictable. And very lame.

Liz Janet says

Does no one think this is a metaphor for something? Like maybe sexuality or gender identity?

This is a social issues book, it is an allegory for homosexuality and how it is seen around the world. Maybe I am just reading too much into it, but per example: it is said he was bitten as a child and as he hits his teens the traits surface, which is similar to people are born with a sexuality and tend to express it in their teens. Apart from that, the question of what makes a human is made, and this is the answer:

"And I realize that the decision to be human is not one single instant, but is a thousand choices made very day. It is choices we make every second and requires constant vigilance. We have to fight to remain human."

karen says

i read this because i was surprised that i liked feed so much when i read it for class. and as a teen book, its really good. but to a grown-up reader, there are an uncomfortable amount of unanswered questions regarding characters motivations and chronic gullibility and not enough history of the town that would make their responses and beliefs plausible... but as a fun, day-off, all-you-can-eat-buffet-made-me-too-sleepy-for-proust book, it was perfect. i am going to carefully say here that, unlike the pat endings of teen fiction when i was young, the recent crop of teen fiction seems to leave things more ambiguous and emotionally jarring, and this is a trend of which i approve. "phew", says the multi-million dollar teen fiction industry, "karen approves".

Ealaindraoi says

An interesting take on the whole vampire legend. In Chris's world, vampires have always existed. People are wary of vampires, and lynch them when they find them. As his hometown prepares for the annual Sad Festival of Vampires with an ancient ritual (held in a Whitehen Pantry) that keeps Tch'muchgar, the Vampire Lord locked into a prison world, Chris seems to be turning into a vampire. Can he trust his friends and family NOT to lynch him, if that happens? Should he trust Chet a self described celestial being? to help him not become a blood sucking freak?

While this was a good idea of a new approach to the old I-was-a-teenage-vampire novel, it was ultimately unsatisfying. It was amusing at points, but it just seemed like the author has a good idea that drove him about half way through the novel, and then he had no idea where to go. It meanders to an unconvincing end. It's quite bloody and violent, so if you prefer the more stylized vampire novel, beware.

Unless you feel a need to read every vampire novel available, skip this one.

Sandra Strange says

OK, so I'm looking for vampire books I can actually have on my shelves for students to borrow. So far, I haven't found enough good additional reading for fans of *Twilight*. *So I see this book, winner of a national book award, recommended in various publications as a good blend of adolescent angst and horror. Well, I really didn't like it at all--mainly because of the ending. If you don't mind the triumph of evil, mixed with the crude language of typical teenage boys, if you can identify with a pretty typical, unheroic protagonist who is cut off with NO ONE who really cares about him, and if you appreciate particularly unresolved, unhappy endings, you will like this book. I sometimes wonder if the people handing out prizes for adolescent lit actually ask the adolescents if they like/appreciate the novels, or if they choose on the basis of purely adult values. Now I sometimes enjoy thoughtful novels that end unhappily because they are meant to stimulate productive discussion. I don't think that this one, which is mainly fantasy adventure, has enough depth of reality based conflict to be one of those novels.*

Rachel says

This book was a waste of my time. I did not enjoy it. I kept waiting for it to get good, but it never happened. I hate that this book left the protagonist in a horrible situation where nothing he could do would change anything. He is left without any choice--without any course of action to make things at all better.

In this book, when the protagonist, Chris, hits puberty, he doesn't just get zits--he starts turning into a vampire. And he lives in a society where vampires are common and people hunt them down and kill them all the time.

Chris cannot tell anyone what he has become because he wants to live. However, he doesn't have much of a choice. He can either start killing humans for nourishment and then get captured and killed, or he can starve to death. Either road leads to death. There is nothing he can do.

Then he is presented with another option that turns out to be nothing but a lie. He tries to do the right thing, but everything is against him. He is left feeling absolutely hopeless, and so is the reader. Not worth the read.

Destinee Sutton says

Can I say how much I enjoy M.T. Anderson's writing? Soooo much. His books are sophisticated and intelligent, and very refreshing after reading a lot of exciting but cliche-ridden YA bestsellers.

Thirsty does not romanticize vampires. It starts off pretty funny and you think this is going to be some camp novel that makes fun of anything that takes itself too seriously. But then the story gets darker and darker and pretty soon you realize that Anderson has a lot more going on than you thought.

This is the kind of YA novel that could be taught in a 10th grade English class.

Michele says

I read this because I enjoyed *Feed* immensely, but I was very disappointed. This is one of the most depressing books I've read in a long time. On the plus side, the dog doesn't die. That and the charming bizarreness of the novel's world ("Would you like some of Jennifer? Or some of Dave?"; the dilemma posed for parents by Boston's lottery for virgins) saved it from getting only a single star.

Like *Feed*, the book opens with a light-hearted tone but descends into darkness. The main character, Chris, lives in a mildly alternate America where vampires are a commonly accepted hazard, like alligators or rattlesnakes, and are captured and lynched whenever possible. The citizens of Christopher's town perform a ritual every year to keep the vampire king Tch'muchgar imprisoned underneath their reservoir. Amusingly, the ritual is more like a carnival that just happens to include some Latin and sacrificing a goat, and part of it is done at a local restaurant because the restaurant was built on top of one of the ritual sites. Chris discovers that for some unknown reason he is becoming a vampire himself and is understandably a bit worried. He's approached by Chet (seriously? Chet?) who claims to be a servant of the Forces of Light and promises to cure Christopher's vampirism if Chris will deliver a device to Tch'muchgar's prison that will destroy him. Chris does as he is told, but it turns out Chet was lying and either can't or won't cure him (in D&D terms, Chet would be Neutral Evil), so the book ends with Chris in his bedroom agonizingly thirsty and thinking about whether or not to kill his family.

Anderson's writing style, which I liked in the near-future dystopia of *Feed* because it fit the setting and the characters, feels a bit stilted and awkward here. There are some hilarious bits, such as this: "I have read about a billion spy novels, and when you are following someone, you hide behind newspapers, or pretend to paint the house next door, or hide a camera inside a spacious poodle." Who thinks to describe a poodle as spacious?? Other bits are almost poetic, such as this description of the man who has been following Chris: "He follows me to school. He waits on the circle at the base of the American flag, and every class I'm in he turns like the shadow on a sundial to face the windows." But overall, the absence of contractions and oddly detached manner of speaking didn't work for me in this story.

My biggest issue with this book, though, is that nothing really happens. There is no real conflict, no real tension, and worst of all no resolution. Yeah, the vampire king is killed, but since he never rises to the level of an open/active threat (and it turns out he wanted to die anyway) it's wholly irrelevant. Christopher's role in Tch'muchgar's death, where one might have expected some challenges and the need for him to show some gumption, is quickly and easily accomplished with zero difficulty. The nascent romance between Chris and Rebecca never goes anywhere, nor do the red herrings about Rebecca studying the Kabbalah which I thought might offer a way for Chris and Rebecca to join forces and take some initiative. Unlike the main character in *Feed*, Chris never really grapples with his central dilemma; he doesn't like it, he's worried and isolated, but he just mopes around waiting. In the end he has been disappointed but has not grown or changed and has taken no action since all his time was used up waiting for Chet to keep his promise. There is no love in this book (his own mother will turn him in if she thinks he's become a vampire), no affection, no passion, no loyalty (he and his friends are often mean to each other), no striving, nothing to counteract the mundane dismalness of the situation. Chris is passive and helpless in the face of what's happening to him. Worst of all, he is not only lied to and manipulated by Chet, Chet actually *makes fun of him* at the end! How disgustingly small and mean-spirited is that??

The single exception, and to me by far the best scene, is when Chris encounters his friend's dog, Bongo, and

struggles with his desire to kill it and suck its blood. He is saved from this brutal act by his ability to empathize, his wish not to cause his friend pain. For this one brief moment Chris became a real person for me, his dilemma vivid and agonizing; my heart broke for him a little even as I applauded his strength and self-control. If rest of the book, or even just Chris, had sustained that same intensity and depth of character I might have liked it better.

A minor nit, but the use of the word "lynching" for the staking of vampires irritated me. Lynching is a weighty word that needs to be applied judiciously and it simply doesn't work here.

A number of other reviewers saw the vampirism as a metaphor for being gay, which totally escaped me. If it is, then it certainly is a very discouraging one and seems more appropriate for the mid-1970s than today.

Elsa R says

I loved this book because it was a different vampire book like some of them don't make sense at all but this. One does. This book is not for 4th grade and younger though, but if you are older it would be fine. This book is a scary book and is fiction. This book is about a boy named Chris and he is turning into a vampire and 'Chet' is making him put an object into the evil Vampire Lords world. Chet says he is from the Forces of Light but is he lying to Chris?

Lisa Rathbun says

My hometown was mentioned on the first page of this book! I grew up in area code 413, so that always makes a book strike home in a special way when its setting is a place you know well. It was a strange world though, similar to ours in every way except that people freely acknowledge that vampires and fairies walk among us. Every year the town council has to do a special ceremony in order to keep the evil Vampire Lord defeated and unable to enter our world. It was a strange dichotomy between hearing accurate details like gas stations named Cumberland Farms and having a community going to a vampire "lynching".

The first person narrator drew me in with short, concise sentences and some striking descriptions like the following: "The three radio towers blink and blurt out their silent soft rock like gagged victims bleating for help. The sun throws sludgy scarlet smudges over the morning clouds. The trees are full of life; and in the dawn, they are ruby like gore."

The story grows gradually darker as the main character feels more and more isolated from the people around him. There is little redemptive or attractive in his world. People tend to be self-focused and petty; life seems empty and purposeless. It's realistic but also grim. I liked Chris's determination to make right what he had done, but this feeling seems to come from nowhere. What virtues or morals had been instilled in his life to make him desire to do right so strongly?

Overall, I enjoyed a lot of this story, but in the end found that nothing much had been resolved and that the main character seemed truly alone. (WARNING: language, sexual references)
